

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~system~~ gateway for processing packets in a multi-processor environment, comprising:

a line interface operable to receive a set-up request packet;

a switch processor operable to process the set-up request packet; and

a plurality of processors, the switch processor operable to direct the set-up request packet to a selected one of the plurality of processors, the selected one of the plurality of processors operable to generate a set-up reply packet in response to the set-up request packet, the set-up reply packet including a virtual identifier associated with the selected one of the plurality of processors as assigned by the switch processor, the selected one of the plurality of processors operable to transport the set-up reply packet through the line interface in order to establish a communication session with the selected one of the plurality of processors, the line interface operable to route subsequent packets associated with the communication session directly to the selected one of the plurality of processors in response to the virtual identifier without requiring initial processing by the switch processor.

2. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the line interface is operable to receive an information request packet in the communication session, the information request packet including the virtual identifier, the line interface operable to direct the information request packet to the selected one of the plurality of processors associated with the virtual identifier.

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